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EXAMINER

DURAN, ARTHUR D

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3622

NOTIFICATION DATE

DELIVERY MODE

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ELECTRONIC

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

USPTO@wavsip.com

DETAILED ACTION

Claims 1, 2, 5-29 have been examined.

Response to Amendment

The Amendment filed on is 3/5/10 is sufficient to overcome the prior rejection. However, a new reference has been added to the 103 rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1, 2, 5-29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dandurand ("Market Niche Analysis In the Casino Gaming Industry", Journal of Gambling Studies, Vol. 6(1), Spring 1990) in view of Sheppard (US 6,026,397) in view of Acres (20060183529) in view of Kelly (6645068).

Regarding claims 1, 18, 21, 24, and 27, Dandurand teaches of analyzing casino customers and segmenting them into groups and sub-groups. (Page 78). Dandurand gives an example where by customers are first grouped based on their "Slot Gaming Budget." (Page 82, Table 1). Then, players with a budget greater than \$500 are further sub-divided based on other attributes. (Page 83, Table 2). After a target player is identified, offers and benefits are conferred to those who fall within that segmentation.

(Page 84). Dandurand teaches that the data is taken from a database (i.e. queried).
(Page 81).

Regarding claim 1, 14-15, 18, 21, 24, and 27, Dandurand does not explicitly teach that this method is accomplished using a computer, however, Dandurand teaches of Management Information Systems (MIS) functions of the enterprise. (Page 84). MIS is a computer system designed to help managers plan and direct business and organizational operations. (Dictionary.com).

Regarding claims 14-15, 18, 21 and 24, Dandurand does not explicitly teach that this method is accomplished using a computer, however, Dandurand teaches of Management Information Systems (MIS) functions of the enterprise. (Page 84). MIS is a computer system designed to help managers plan and direct business and organizational operations. (Dictionary.com). An automatic means to replace a manual activity which accomplished the same result is not sufficient to distinguish over the prior art. *In re Venner*, 262 F.2d 91, 95, 120 USPQ 193, 194 (CCPA 1958). Additionally, applicant teaches that it is already common for data to be collected and searched in “database queries”. (Specification, Page 2). See MPEP § 2144.04. Alternatively, Sheppard teaches of a method for using a computer to segment databases into groups and sub-groups. (Abstract). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, at the time of the invention, to have used a computer to automate the data analysis that Dandurand teaches. One would have been motivated to do so in order to save time and to take advantage of the computing power of a computer.

Additionally, Dandurand teaches of analyzing database information in order to segment various customers in a casino. (Page 81). The database contains information relating to the customers preferences and gaming behavior. (Page 81-82). Based on the customer's preferences (as well as other variables), customers are segmented into groups and sub-groups. (Fig. 1; Page 78). These groups and sub-groups allow for the determination of target market customers and the creation of targeted marketing programs. (Pages 80-81). Dandurand gives an example of this iterative segmentation in use. First customers are segmented based on their "slot gaming budget." (Table 1; Pages 81-82). Thereafter, customers are further segmented based on various other factors, such as gender, age, race, etc. (Table 2; Pages 83-84). After a target player is identified, offers and benefits are conferred to those who fall within that segmentation. (Page 84). Therefore, Dandurand gives an example of an iterative method of obtaining customer data from a database, segmenting customers based on various variables, and providing offers and benefits to those customers that are identified.

Additionally, Dandurand discloses a variety of attributes that can be analyzed for targeting (page 83 table 2) and that particular attributes (zip code) can be further analyzed and that different clusters can be arrived at and that filtering can be performed based on combination of additional variables.

Dandurand does not explicitly disclose that single variables are analyzed for different cluster determining. However, Sheppard discloses that numerous clusters for targeting can be determined (Figures 9a, 9b) and that cluster refinement can be performed in an iterative process with further cluster analysis and filtering (Figure 8) and

that different variables can be analyzed at different levels of refinement and association with similar or dissimilar neighboring clusters (Figure 9b). And, Sheppard discloses that clusters can be analyzed and assessed based on anywhere from a single variable to all variables or anywhere between (Figures 12, 13). Notice in Figure 12 that a cluster can be defined for 4 of the 97 possible parameters. And, notice in Figure 12 that anywhere from 1 to 97 of the possible variables can be utilized for targeting, cluster analysis, and cluster determining. Hence, Sheppard discloses advanced cluster, group, and subgroup determining for targeting purposes. And, notice that Sheppard discloses that the cluster analysis can be iterative and continual to find numerous possible target groups and subgroups. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to add Sheppard's further targeting variable analysis to Dandurand's targeting variable analysis. One would have been motivated to do this in order to better determine target groups and better target users.

Also, Sheppard discloses that different promotions may be presented to the different target groups (col 2, lines 21-20; col 2, lines 44-52).

Additionally, Dandurand does not explicitly disclose a player tracking system from which user attributes can be received. However, the combination of the prior art renders obvious a player tracking system from which user attributes can be received. Applicant's Specification states that a player tracking system is obvious, old, and well known:

"The management and analysis of data has long been important to many industries. As such many methodologies have been developed over the years that are

oriented towards utilizing the relational aspects of collected data and data presentation for a variety of applications. The gaming industry is among those industries where the analysis of collected data is extremely important to optimizing marketing campaigns that directly affect the company's bottom line. Within the gaming industry data are collected as players play games on the casino floor. These data are commonly referred to as player tracking information. This player tracking information is combined together with fundamental player related data elements such as city/state, age, income, etc., to form player data relationships. Using these player data relationships, casinos can combine the data collected from tracking the game play of specific players and target those players with specific marketing campaigns organized in an attempt to increase revenue for the casino" ("Background of the Invention", pages 1-2).

And, Dandurand discloses four obvious methods for collecting data to profile the user, "The Observation Approach", "The Probing Approach", "The Deductive Approach", "the A Priori Approach". (Dandurand, page 79, Figure 2) and that "the purpose of this deductive approach, or any of the other approaches (such as observation, probing, or priori), is to produce a basis for identifying a unique set of preferences for one or more consumers in the target market." Dandurand further states that the observation approach is "market analysts can observe behavior of the target market customers. They will be searching for any differences that might be related to unique target market customers and to unique preferences" (page 78-79). And, Dandurand's disclosure is oriented towards gaming and casinos, "Market Niche Analysis In the Casino Gaming Industry". Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art

at the time the invention was made that Dandurand can use the obvious, old, and well known user information gathering or player tracking system of the Applicant's Background to collect data for use with Dandurand's observation and deduction methods for determining target niches.

And, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the features since the claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable. Or, it is obvious because it is a use of a known technique to improve similar methods in the same way. Or, it is obvious to try, choosing from a finite number of identified, predictable solutions, with a reasonable expectation of success is obvious to try.

Hence, the combination of the prior art renders these features of the Applicant's claims obvious.

Additionally, on 11/10/2008, Applicant added these features to the independent claims:

“wherein one of the individuals of the further subset plays a number of games by betting a total amount lower than any of the individuals of the first subset that are excluded from the further subset”.

And, please see the rejection of the independent claims above or, particularly, the Response to Arguments dated 8/8/08. These sections show how the prior art discloses targeting based on single relational polymorphisms and also based on

clusters, groups, subgroups, niches, microniches, and also anywhere from one to any combination of 97 different targeting variables.

And, in regards to the new features of targeting a group of lower budget players, Dandurand anticipates these features. Dandurand discloses identifying a Slot Gaming Budget and placing players into groups of lower or higher budget players such as Economy, Moderate, and Premium budget players (page 82, Table 1, "Slot Gaming Budget", "Economy", "Moderate", "Premium"). Dandurand further discloses how player Gaming Budget can be tracked (page 83, Table 2, "Gaming Budget"). And, Dandurand discloses that each marketing niche can receive an appropriate marketing program approach for that particular niche:

"The purpose of marketing plans and a marketing planning system is to produce a viable marketing strategy. A marketing strategist is concerned with selecting feasible target markets and developing efficient marketing programs for the selected target market mix. Market niche analysis is a concept and a marketing tool that can improve the development of marketing strategy.

Market niche analysis is a creative process. It can be used to identify new target markets, to improve existing target markets, and to enhance marketing policy. It can be incorporated into the research and MIS (Management Information System) functions of the enterprise." (Dandurand, page 84).

Hence, Dandurand discloses that lower budget players can be targeted. And, in Dandurand, the lower budget players would be marketed to in a different way than the premium budget players would be marketed to.

Also, teaching of a preference does not constitute a teaching away from the proposed combination under review. See In re Fulton, 391 F.3d 1195, 1199-1200, 73 USPQ2d 1141, 1146 (Fed. Cir. 2004). And, while Dandurand discloses targeting premium players, that does not prevent Dandurand from also targeting other market niches. And, Dandurand discloses tracking Economy, Moderate, and Premium budget players. And, Dandurand discloses a marketing approach for each different niche. Hence, Dandurand discloses that lower budget players can be targeted. And, in Dandurand, the lower budget players would be marketed to in a different way than the premium budget players would be marketed to.

Alternatively, the combination of the prior art renders obvious these features. Dandurand does not explicitly disclose targeting lower budget players. However, it has been shown that the combination of the prior art can target any combination of target variables (see preceding). And, player budget is one of the listed variables in Dandurand (page 82, Table 1, "Slot Gaming Budget", "Economy", "Moderate", "Premium"; also, page 83, Table 2). Also, Applicant has stated in the Remarks dated 11/10/2008 how Durand discloses targeting higher budget players or premium players. Also, the MPEP 2144.04.IV.A. states that a change in size/proportion is obvious. Hence, since the prior art targets based on high budget players, it is obvious that Durand can also target based on lower budget players. Also, Dandurand discloses that the marketing strategist should have an efficient marketing approach for each different marketing niche (bottom of page 84). Hence, it is obvious that Dandurand can target premium players and also target budget players. Dandurand can have one marketing

approach for premium players and a different marketing approach for budget players. One would be motivated do this in order to have an efficient marketing approach for each different marketing niche (Dandurand, page 84).

Additionally, on 5/14/2009, Applicant added the following new features to the independent claims “including a player tracking server and a card reader. . .that are received via the card reader and the player tracking server”.

Dandurand and Sheppard disclose player tracking and profiling above. Sheppard discloses a network, server, and processing related to the profiling and tracking (Fig. 1).

Dandurand does not explicitly disclose a card reader or a card reader that can be used for tracking player activities and attributes. However, Acres (see the addition of Acres to the 103 rejection above) discloses the invention operating in a casino ([5, 7, 12]) and using a card and card reader that can be used for tracking player activities and attributes and also a network and server that the card and card reader information is sent to for the profiling and tracking purposes (Abstract; “gaming devices. . . a card reader for detecting a player tracking card inserted therein”; Figures 1, 5, 19, 20, 21). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to add a player tracking card to Dandurand’s player tracking. One would have been motivated to do this in order to better provide a way to track players.

Additionally, on 10/9/09, Applicant added the following new features to the independent claims: identifying selected ones of a plurality of attributes that are

received via a card reader and a player tracking server and that are shared by individuals in a further subset to define a promotional offering. This step is performed after a download of player tracking software by a player tracking unit from a player tracking server of a player tracking system. The downloading step is performed when the player tracking unit is powered on.

The prior art combination renders obvious these features.

Dandurand does not explicitly disclose software on the game machine or downloading software to the game machine. However, Acres a network with a computer networked to the gaming machines (Fig. 1, 2) and that the game machines are powered up (Fig. 13, 23) and player tracking at the game machine (Fig. 21). Acres further discloses updating the software at the game machine:

“[0024] FIG. 1 is an illustration of a system for monitoring and configuring gaming devices according to the invention.

[0025] FIG. 2 is a block diagram of an electronic module associated with each gaming device to permit monitoring and configuring thereof.”.

Acres further discloses updating the software for player tracking and also updating when the machine is powered on (following citations and also [38, 45, 47, 48, 53, 116, 189, 216]):

“[0048] FIG. 23 is a flow chart for the power-on procedure for the player tracking (PT) node of FIG. 2, which is implemented in firmware executed by the PT controller.;

[0189] In order to implement each of these features, the various computers and microcontrollers each execute software or firmware.;

[116]... download the updated program to the DCN controller and the DCN controller would overwrite the program memory with the downloaded program;

[0216] Another type of message is one including configuration data for the DCN. . . This message is used to override the DCN's internal variables, e.g., to get a DCN out of a lock-up condition, or to download new firmware to the DCN for execution”.

Also, note that the player tracking software must have been downloaded in order to be used for tracking.

Hence, Acres discloses a gaming machine where the player inserts a card and that the gaming machine is networked and that the game machine is powered on and that the gaming machine can receive software downloads or updates when the machine is powered on. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to add Acres gaming machine with updateable tracking software to Dandurand's tracking a player who uses a game machine. One would have been motivated to do this in order to better be able to track the gaming player.

Also, Acres further discloses player targeting based on player attributes and player card activity ([4, 14, 19, 102, 185, 241]). Acres further discloses targeting groups ([14, 185, 241]). And, Dandurand (see rejection above) and Sheppard (Abstract and rejection above) further discloses targeting groups with particular attributes.

Hence, the prior art combination renders obvious identifying selected ones of a plurality of attributes that are received via a card reader and a player tracking server

and that are shared by individuals in a further subset to define a promotional offering. This step is performed after a download of player tracking software by a player tracking unit from a player tracking server of a player tracking system. The downloading step is performed when the player tracking unit is powered on.

Additionally, on 3/5/10, Applicant added the following features to the independent claims:

“the plurality of attributes received via the player tracking system and a plurality of voice commands received via the player tracking unit”.

Examiner notes that Applicant's Specification (PG_PUB) specifies a microphone ([54]) and voice recognition for entering or inputting commands ([56, 60]).

As noted above, the prior art discloses a variety of commands and inputs at the player tracking unit and that the inputs and commands at the player tracking unit are tracked for targeting purposes. Dandurand does not explicitly disclose voice commands at the player tracking unit. However, there are a variety of input and command buttons, levers, keyboards, touchscreens, microphones, speakers, etc that are commonly used for input and output at gaming devices, player tracking units, kiosks, ATMs, etc. And, Acres discloses the gaming device making sounds ([174]). And, Kelly discloses a card reader and profile for targeting in a casino or gaming environment and device (Abstract; throughout Kelly). And, Kelly discloses a variety of input and command possibilities at a player tracking unit or gaming device including microphones, speech input, voice recognition:

“Player input typically includes game commands provided by controlling

devices such as buttons, keyboard, dials, joystick controls, touch screen, track ball, mouse, gun device, steering wheel, foot pedals, speech input through a microphone, or any other input used in playing a game and providing selections. For example, the player can move a joystick to control a graphical object displayed on a video screen. Each type of user input can provide a particular game command to the computer, and the computer interprets the commands and influences game states and game events in the game process accordingly (5:17-30);

The computer can include plug-in interface cards such as video cards, 3-D graphics cards, sound cards, controller cards, etc. Standard peripherals can be coupled to the I/O 210 as input devices 200 and output devices 212, such as a CD-ROM drive, storage device (floppy disk drive, hard disk drive, etc.), PCMCIA card, printer, stylus and tablet, microphone for voice recognition, camera, or communication device” (6:5-15).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to add Kelly’s microphone at a device for speech input and commands to the prior art’s command and inputs at a player tracking unit. One would have been motivated to do this in order to better allow the user to make inputs and commands.

Regarding claim 2, in the example given by Dandurand, the customers are sorted based on their “slot gaming budget.” Those who have a budget greater than \$500 are placed in the group “premium” which is then further segmented.

Regarding claim 5, applicant teaches of defining a “gaming DNA”. Applicant teaches that a “gaming DNA” for an individual is “any subset of the attributes stored in the system’s player tracking database.” (Specification, Page 14). Dandurand teaches creating user profiles with selected variables. (Page 82)

Regarding claims 6-8, applicant teaches that the attributes of the “gaming DNA” can be equal to, more than or less than the “selected attributes.” Applicant teaches that the DNA may “vary from analysis to analysis.” (Specification, Page 14). The DNA may be “redefined each time the player tracking database is mined.” (Id.). Dandurand does not explicitly teach every possibility, however, Dandurand teaches that the profile is composed of selected variables. (Page 82) Dandurand further teaches that the profile could be expanded into a “richer profile” with more variables or could be reduced to focus on a niche. (Page 83, 84).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, at the time of the invention, to have created the user profile with any number of user attributes. One would have been motivated to do so in order to expand or reduce the “niche” market.

Regarding claim 9, Dandurand teaches of a target market strategy on the segmented groups. (Page 74).

Regarding claim 10, applicant teaches that the marketing strategy comprises “identifying at least one single relational polymorphism” between the subsets. Applicant teaches that a “single relational polymorphism” is an attribute which is different for a subset of individuals. (Specification, Page 17). Dandurand teaches of a similar method

whereby the marketing strategy is focused on specific sub-groups, or “niche markets.” (Page 83). These “sub-groups” share the same parent group; in this case, budgets greater than \$500.

Regarding claim 11 and 13, Dandurand teaches of similar attributes. (Page 83, Table 2).

Regarding claim 12, and 17, Dandurand teaches a similar method of using “Las Vegas Visitor Profile” as the database that consists of players gambling in Las Vegas. (Page 82).

Regarding claim 16, 17, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25, and 26, Dandurand teaches of similar tracking data, such as average bet at electronic slots. (Page 83).

Claim 28: See claim 1. Also, Applicant’s Specification says that it is old and well known that, “ Within the gaming industry data are collected as players play games on the casino floor. These data are commonly referred to as player tracking information.” (page 1, 2). And, Sheppard discloses a network and collecting data and presenting data to a server/database for analysis (Fig. 1) and throughout the Sheppard Specification. Hence, it is obvious that casino game play data from specific games can be connected to a central database/server. Please see the motivation from claim 1.

Claim 29: The prior art further discloses wherein the player tracking server comprises the relational database (Sheppard, 1:10-30; Acres, [13]).

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments have been fully considered but are moot in view of the new grounds of rejection above. Please note the addition of the Kelly reference to the 103 rejection above. Also, please note the following.

On 3/5/10, Applicant added the following features to the independent claims:

“the plurality of attributes received via the player tracking system and a plurality of voice commands received via the player tracking unit”.

And, Applicant's Remarks dated 3/5/10 address these new features.

Examiner notes that Applicant's Specification (PG_PUB) specifies a microphone ([54]) and voice recognition for entering or inputting commands ([56, 60]).

As noted above, the prior art discloses a variety of commands and inputs at the player tracking unit and that the inputs and commands at the player tracking unit are tracked for targeting purposes. Dandurand does not explicitly disclose voice commands at the player tracking unit. However, there are a variety of input and command buttons, levers, keyboards, touchscreens, microphones, speakers, etc that are commonly used for input and output at gaming devices, player tracking units, kiosks, ATMs, etc. And, Acres discloses the gaming device making sounds ([174]). And, Kelly discloses a card reader and profile for targeting in a casino or gaming environment and device (Abstract; throughout Kelly). And, Kelly discloses a variety of input and command possibilities at a player tracking unit or gaming device including microphones, speech input, voice recognition:

“Player input typically includes game commands provided by controlling

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devices such as buttons, keyboard, dials, joystick controls, touch screen, track ball, mouse, gun device, steering wheel, foot pedals, speech input through a microphone, or any other input used in playing a game and providing selections. For example, the player can move a joystick to control a graphical object displayed on a video screen. Each type of user input can provide a particular game command to the computer, and the computer interprets the commands and influences game states and game events in the game process accordingly (5:17-30);

The computer can include plug-in interface cards such as video cards, 3-D graphics cards, sound cards, controller cards, etc. Standard peripherals can be coupled to the I/O 210 as input devices 200 and output devices 212, such as a CD-ROM drive, storage device (floppy disk drive, hard disk drive, etc.), PCMCIA card, printer, stylus and tablet, microphone for voice recognition, camera, or communication device" (6:5-15).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to add Kelly's microphone at a device for speech input and commands to the prior art's command and inputs at a player tracking unit. One would have been motivated to do this in order to better allow the user to make inputs and commands.

Hence, the claims are rendered obvious by the combination of prior art.

Conclusion

a) Kelly 6645068 discloses a card reader in a casino and also other relevant features.

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to 10066176 whose telephone number is (571)272-6718. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon- Fri, 8:00-4:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Eric Stamber can be reached on (571) 272-6724. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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Art Unit 3622

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3/30/2010